

WORLDCom-SPRINT MERGER

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address a couple of very recent news articles about the WorldCom-Sprint merger. I have been a supporter of the proposed merger since its announcement in October of 1999. My reasons for supporting the merger are the same now as they were then. When we wrote and passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996, we predicted many things, among them some consolidation in the telecom market. One of the major reasons for this urge to merge is to accommodate positive changes in the industry both domestically and internationally. These changes would be the direct result of greater competition and the resulting growth in the telecommunications sector.

The distinctions between local and long distance have begun to blur and almost disappear. Telecommunications companies, in order to survive and compete on a global basis need to have global size and reach. The fastest and most practical way to achieve such economies of scale is through strategic unions. The new world telecom company must provide services that will go beyond local or long distance. They must offer a wide range of services including at the very least local, long distance, high-speed Internet access, and wireless.

I believe the proposed WorldCom-Sprint merger is a textbook example of what we in Congress envisioned when we passed the Telecom Act. The combination of these two corporations would create an American com-

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pany suited to compete with anybody and everybody on a global basis for the foreseeable future. Its size and offerings will create jobs, encourage technological innovations, and promote competitive pricing for consumers.

Given that, you can see why I am so concerned about the recent articles I've read in the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal stating that the European Commission is on the verge of recommending against approving the merger. While I'm not privy to the technical reviews conducted by the E.C. and don't know why they may have reached their reported conclusion, I find it disconcerting to see actual quotes attributed to "senior EU officials" before the member states have voted. I also find it troublesome to read in the papers statements made by U.S. Department of Justice officials stating that they are inclined to recommend that the merger be blocked. Does the merger review process encourage the publication of intentions, real or imagined, which could have an effect on the final outcome of the review? I doubt that it does, and I am confident that it is not productive to do so. I believe it is important that the all merger review panels have an established and fair process to which they strictly adhere. Perhaps if that can still be done, they will find that this merger brings a great deal to the economy, the telecom industry and the consumers it seeks to serve.

TRIBUTE TO ATHLETE OTIS HARRIS JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand before you and recognize the outstanding sportsmanship and accomplishments of one of the top 400-meter high school runners that Mississippi has ever produced. Otis Harris Jr., has showcased his talents to the people in Mississippi, and is now on his way to impress the world.

Harris is a recent graduate of Hinds Agricultural High School. During his high school career, he participated in some of the nation's most prestigious track events. He won the Class 2A 100, 200, and 400 meter races as a junior and continued his success as a senior by winning the 200, and the 400 meter races. To add to his accomplishments, Harris helped his high school win three consecutive Class 2A titles. He was also named to the All-State track and field team. Harris' performances over the years have landed him an invitation to compete in the U.S. Junior Nationals located in Denton, Texas. There, he will be competing against the best high school and college freshman runners from around the country for a spot on the National Junior Olympic world team.

Mr. Speaker, Otis Harris Jr. exemplifies the strength and determination of America's youth. His track records show that he has what it takes to excel at all of his endeavors. He is sure to represent the State of Mississippi well for a long time to come.